NATIONAL CANNERS ASSOCIATION

Information Letter

FOR N. C. A. MEMBERS

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Industry Approves Plan to Prevent Sale of Swells

That the canning industry is entirely in sympathy with the proposed measures to prevent the sale of spoiled or defective cans of food is shown by the response to the letter of March 5th, sent to canners by the Association's Committee on Cooperation with the Bureau of Chemistry. Canners were asked to write to the Washington office of the Association, indicating their purpose to cooperate in the plan outlined in the Committee's letter. Thus far over three hundred replies have been received, in all of which 100 per cent cooperation is pledged.

Members of the Association who may not have received the letter referred to should notify the Washington office. All who have received the letter and have not yet replied are asked to do so as soon as possible, for the Bureau of Chemistry, as well as the Committee, desires to learn the attitude of every canner on this important matter.

Only Adequate Containers Should be Used

In ordering containers for the coming season's pack, canners should bear in mind the action of the Louisville Convention in giving general approval to the specifications in N. C. A. Bulletin No. 47. These specifications have not been formally adopted by the Classification Committee, but it is to the interest of the individual canners, and to the entire industry, that canners purchase and use only such containers as will give adequate service and protection. Use of such containers will remove any need that may now be felt for the adoption of additional or more stringent regulations.

The Question of Good Pea Seed

With last week's issue of the Information Letter, members were furnished a bulletin prepared by the Raw Products Research Bureau on "What It Means to Grow Good Pea Seed." The Association has received the following comment on the circular from a canning corporation:

"We are deeply interested and pleased to read your article emphasizing the expert care that is necessary to develop and reproduce good seed. Many canners fail to recognize the importance of getting the best strains of seed, not realizing that heredity and training are as necessary to produce good seed as they are to produce good live stock.

"During the past four months, we have received many circulars with long lists of offerings of pea seed, alleging the seed parentage to be from reliable well-known seed growers; we would not use such seed if it was given to us. Such lists and quantities of seed reveal a very unfortunate practice among canners in letting part of their canning acreage go to seed. Some canners plant an acreage in excess of their viner capacity, so that they are compelled to abandon part of the acreage in case of a normal crop. In other cases, part of their acreage, due to uneven maturity, disease, poor stand, etc., is abandoned because it would not pay to harvest same for canning purposes, yet such acreage is allowed to go to seed to salvage the crop.

"Such canners' seed is practically on a par with the so-called 'farmers stocks,' which no informed canner would think of purchasing, and for the handling of which he would condemn the seedsman. Recent investigations show much of this seed to be contaminated with disease because disease is prevalent in the soil of those sections where the canning industry has been long established. Such seed is not used but sold by the canner growing same, and the ignorant purchaser probably suffers a crop loss.

"Now our object in writing you is this: Can not your Association do something to prevent the recurrence each year of all this poor seed? Before this new planting season, can you not so enlighten the canners as to the comparative worthlessness of such seed that they will play fair with their brother canners and only plant such acreage as they can properly handle with their canning equipment? It is a greater economic folly to salvage poor seed than it is to pack sub-standard quality in canned foods."

Navy Asks Bids on Canned Tomatoes

Bids for canned tomatoes, to be opened April 20, are being asked by the Navy Department, 60,000 pounds for delivery at Boston and 180,000 pounds at Brooklyn. Copies of the schedule (5417) on which to submit bids may be obtained from the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts, Navy Department, Washington, D. C.

Corn Seed Testing and Treatment

In previous issues of the Information Letter reference has been made to the treatment of seed with phenol-mercury compounds. C. T. Gregory of the Purdue Agricultural Experiment Station has contributed an article to a recent issue of the Indiana Farmers Guide on corn seed testing versus corn seed treatment that will be of interest to corn growers in this connection. Mr. Gregory begins his article by stating:

"Is it possible to treat corn seed with any disinfectant and get as good results as with testing by the modified rag doll method? Some folks say that we can improve the yield and quality of corn by treating the seed, but is this true? The truth of the matter is that experiments have shown that seed treatment of corn does improve the yield, but there is a catch in these experiments. The corn seed that was treated and which gave the big increase in yield was heavily infested with Diplodia and Fusarium ear rot diseases. But, when rag doll tested disease-free seed was used, the seed treatment had no effect. Moreover, the yields from the disease-free, well selected corn were much better than from the disease-infested treated seed.

"Boiled down to the true facts of the matter it would appear that if good, high-grade tested seed can not be secured, or if for some reason a poor lot of corn must be used for seed, then seed treatment with the various commercial phenol-mercury compounds may be of value. There is still another factor that must also be considered. Suppose we do treat our poor seed to get the increased yield. What sort of stuff will we have for seed corn next year? The good corn farmer is after a permanent improvement in his corn, an improvement that will show next year and which can be increased each year. But, what will be the result if we use the bad corn and treat it? Of course the treatment may get rid of the rots this year but the susceptibility to the disease still remains in the plants. No amount of seed treating can rid the corn plant of its inherent weakness. The only thing that can possibly give a permanent and lasting im-

provement is the use of good seed corn from strong plants. So, I repeat, any farmer who has poor seed corn which he can not or will not test will probably be benefited this year by treating his seed, but he must not expect the yields that could be obtained with good seed."

After discussing facilities in Indiana for testing seed corn, and methods that growers may follow, Mr. Gregory concludes his article:

"One further fact has been developed by the experiments at Purdue and by various corn growers in the state. All the value of our seed selection and of our seed testing may be lost if we do not fertilize properly. Many of our Indiana soils need potash. The lack of this fertilizer often results in broken stalks and broken shanks. In soils deficient in potash iron will enter through the roots and becoming lodged at the joints, will weaken the tissue which will be easily attacked by certain fungi or germs resulting in a serious rot. When the plants are stunted and poorly developed it indicates a lack of phosphate. Such corn will be benefitted by applications of phosphate and potash to the soil. The corn improvement program which will do most to eliminate the root rot disease and to improve the yield and quality of corn is seed testing, proper fertility of the soil followed by selection of seed ears in the field next fall. This selection must be done before frost kills the plants in order that mature ears from green healthy plants may be chosen."

Refuses to Reduce Transcontinental Rates

In its decision on Fourth Section Application No. 12436, the Interstate Commerce Commission has denied the application of transcontinental railroads for authority to establish reduced freight rates on certain commodities without making corresponding reductions in the rates to intermediate points.

Canned Foods in the Average Home

In an article entitled "A Few Truths About Canned Foods" in the March number of "The Hostess," Clara Meadows gives some excellent suggestions for the use of canned foods, and at the same time points out the necessary role they play in the average home.

"There are some fortunate ones," the writer states, "who can afford to spend any amount of money on hot-house fruits and vegetables brought from far countries and held in refrig-

erators ready to supply their demand the year round. But no matter how much money one may have to spend on rare and unseasonable foods, they are available only to those who live in large cities. At their best these luxuries are often stale and tasteless, and the woman of means who does her own marketing finds that she can satisfy the palates of her family quite readily by choosing good brands of canned foods instead of the stale, half-ripe fruit or vegetables from the expensive markets."

Effect of Sweet Clover on Corn Yield

In the Agricultural Leader's Digest for January a county agent reports upon the value of lime and sweet clover in increasing the yield of sweet corn. Three plots were planted—one on limed ground in which clover was plowed under, one on a heavily manured ground, and a third untreated. The sweet clover plot made 31.8 bushels per acre despite drouth; the untreated ground yielded 15.1 bushels. The plot which received 25 tons of manure per acre yielded almost the same as the sweet clover corn. The latter plot had received 4 tons of limestone before growing the sweet clover. There was a striking difference in the quality of the corn, that from the sweet clover being far superior to corn from the untreated plot.

Freight Movement

Revenue freight loaded during the week ended March 6 totaled 964,681 cars, an increase of 52,023 cars over the preceding week, when freight shipments were reduced somewhat due to the observance of Washington's Birthday. Compared with the corresponding week last year, the total for the week of March 6 was an increase of 32,637 cars.

Canning Crops Specialist for Maryland

The University of Maryland Extension Service announced recently that Mr. L. M. Goodwin, formerly County Agent in Caroline County, has been appointed as Canning Crops Specialist for the state to succeed Mr. A. D. Radebaugh. Mr. Goodwin's appointment is effective March 1.

Beef consumption in 1925, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, reached the highest point on record. The per capita consumption of beef was 63.1 pounds, and of all meats 154.3 pounds.

Proposed Amendment to Rule on Marking Fiber Board Boxes

The carriers' three classification committees, it is announced, have reached an agreement upon the requirements for marking fiber board boxes, and propose to publish in the next supplement to Consolidated Classification No. 4 an amended Section 8 (b), Rule 41, to read as follows:

"When used for less carload shipments, boxes that do not show description of contents must be marked with an identifying symbol or number and the identifying symbol or number must be shown on shipping order and bill of lading."

The section which this supersedes now reads:

"Boxes must also show description of contents."

Hearing on Rate Case Assigned

The Interstate Commerce Commission has announced that a hearing in the case involving rates on canned foods from Central and Illinois Freight Association Territory to the Mississippi Valley will be held at Chicago before Examiner Carter on May 19.

Bill to Require Marking of Prison-Made Goods

A bill (S. 3340) to regulate interstate commerce in articles made by convict labor has been introduced by Senator Fess of Ohio. Under the provisions of this bill prison-made goods, when placed in interstate commerce, would be required to bear on the goods themselves or on the container, a clear and legible label or brand indicating that the goods are made by convict labor or in an establishment employing such labor. It would be unlawful to destroy, remove, obliterate, or mutilate such mark or label when the goods are shipped or, after shipment, are held for sale or exchange. The Secretary of Labor would be given authority to enforce the provisions of the bill.

An analysis of the foreign trade of the United States in the calendar year 1925 has been issued by the U. S. Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce as Trade Information Bulletin No. 387.

Trend of Wholesale and Retail Prices

From January to February there was a slight decline in the general level of wholesale prices, according to the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Farm products and foods declined appreciably below the level for January. Slightly lower prices were reported for other groups, except fuel, which averaged higher. The Bureau's retail price index shows a decrease of over 1½ per cent on February 15 as compared with January 15.